

Proclamation

Visayans (also spelled *Bisayans*) generally refer to people who trace their ancestry to the Bisayan-speaking region in the central Philippines which includes the islands of Panay, Romblon, Guimaras, Negros, Cebu, Bohol, Siquijor, Leyte, Biliran and Samar.

It was in this region that on the morning of April 27, 1521, Chieftan Lapu-Lapu faced 49 Spanish soldiers led by Portuguese captain Ferdinand Magellan. Magellan and several of his men were killed in the altercation, setting back Spanish colonization by almost 50 years.

Although the sakadas started arriving in Hawai'i in 1906, in 1909 the first group of 639 Visayan *sakadas*, including women and children, arrived to work on the sugar plantations in Kahuku, Waialua, `Ewa and Waipahu on O`ahu, as well as numerous plantations on Kaua`i and the Big Island. Within one year, almost three thousand Visayans immigrated to our islands.

The idea of a statewide organization encompassing all Visayan groups in Hawai'i began in the early 1980s. By 1985, the Congress of Visayan Organizations, also known as the Visayan Congress or COVO, was created to organize and unify all of the Visayan organizations in Hawai'i.

COVO is managed by a Board of Governors, which consists of the President, other executive officers, area governors and presidents of the Island Councils and has affiliates from nearly 20 independent organizations statewide. One of their missions is to perpetuate their native culture and language.

COVO holds an annual convention and elects its officers every two years. This year, with the theme: "*Building Community beyond the Filipino Centennial*," the 19th Annual Statewide Convention honors the Centennial celebration of the arrival of the first *sakadas* in our islands.

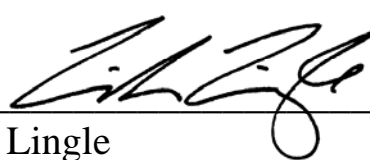
The Lapu-Lapu Awards will be held at the Pacific Beach Hotel immediately following the convention. During this prestigious ceremony, Filipinos of Visayan ancestry will be honored in the categories of lifetime achievement and service; individual achievement; young achievers; and outstanding members.

THEREFORE, I, LINDA LINGLE, Governor of the State of Hawai'i, and **I, JAMES R. "DUKE" AIONA, JR.**, Lieutenant Governor, do hereby proclaim **August 6, 2006**, as

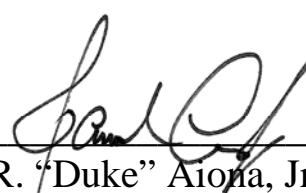
THE CONGRESS OF VISAYAN ORGANIZATIONS DAY

in Hawai'i and commend everyone for their efforts in unifying the people of Visayan ancestry.

DONE at the State Capitol, in the Executive Chambers, Honolulu, State of Hawai'i, this third day of August 2006.



Linda Lingle
Governor, State of Hawai'i



James R. "Duke" Aiona, Jr.
Lieutenant Governor, State of Hawai'i